The OLDEST PROFESSION *in the* WORLD

WM. J. ROBINSON, M.D.

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THE OLDEST PROFESSION IN THE WORLD—PROSTITUTION

The Oldest Profession in the World

PROSTITUTION

ITS UNDERLYING CAUSES, ITS TREATMENT AND ITS FUTURE

Written for Private Circulation

By

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With an Introduction by

HARRY ELMER BARNES, PH.D.

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À mon cher et fidèle ami

G. HARDY

(*de Paris*)

W. J. R.

INTRODUCTION

HARRY ELMER BARNES, PH.D.

There can be little doubt that the attitudes and practices in the field of sexology constitute the most archaic aspect of American culture to-day, with the exception of religion. Indeed, the barbarities and anachronisms in our sex mores and institutions are primarily due to their derivation from, and contamination, by supernatural religion. As Isaac Goldberg has well observed, he who speaks of sex in western civilization speaks by implication of religion. The two are inseparable.

We need not accept the extreme Freudian, or better the pseudo-Freudian, notion that sex is the most important thing in human life or that all our mental and nervous diseases and personal unhappiness arise out of sex issues. Yet we can assert with confidence that there has never been a completely happy person unless he has arrived at an adequate sublimation or adjustment of his sex urges. We smile at recent recrudescences of the witch-cult in rural Pennsylvania, but this was a respectable occurrence compared to the report recently circulated by the *British Social Hygiene Association* to the effect that there was not the slightest evidence that unlimited sex restraint and starvation has any deleterious nervous, mental or physical results. It may be affirmed with assurance that, on the contrary, the unscientific,

warped and distorted views on sex produced by orthodox religion are more productive of needless pain, misery and social maladjustment than any other single cause of human anguish and dissatisfaction.

Scientific and technical sexology has made great strides in the last generation, but its full application to the solution of human ills and the removal of unhappiness has been seriously handicapped by the opposition of those unreasoning taboos which have come down from an earlier theological age when man was primarily concerned with securing his heavenly salvation rather than advancing his human happiness here on earth. Further, such sexology as can be circulated has too often taken on a technical cast and has enjoyed only a very limited distribution. Hence, the average man on the street—or even the general run of better educated citizens have remained entirely ignorant of its existence and have continued to seek such sex knowledge as they possess from the equally inadequate and deplorable information dispensed by orthodox clergymen, professional charlatans and the gutter.

Dr. William J. Robinson has not only carried on a distinguished career as a practicing specialist in genito-urinary diseases for some thirty years, thus contributing to our technical and clinical knowledge in these fields, but he has also done more than any other American physician in the way of humanizing scientific sexology. In this field he has succeeded admirably in doing what James Harvey Rob-

inson has called for in the whole area of modern scientific knowledge. He is not the devotee of a cult, nor is he obsessed with some particular application of sexology to sociological practice. He has endeavored to apply his wide clinical information and his broad humanitarian outlook to every aspect of the impingement of sex on society. No one can consider Dr. Robinson in any sense an apologist for reckless free love or conscienceless philandering. In his books one will discover some of the most eloquent and logical denunciations of that sort of conduct to be found in all medical and sociological literature. What he has stood for is a handling of the sex problem in harmony with medical knowledge and the promotion of human happiness, whatever the tenets and practices of the religionist and the traditionalist.

Dr. Robinson has written many books during his campaign of a generation to humanize sexology. Perhaps, he is best known for his work on birth control. This he regards as the most important single issue in the sex problem, and to it he has given some of his best thought and most courageous support. While his best clinical work is devoted to sex problems of the male, Dr. Robinson is probably best known for his discussions of the sex problems of woman. Most sexologists still look upon sex as a male faculty, or at least only open to public discussion when thus interpreted. Dr. Robinson has not been loath to suggest that women possess the physical equipment of sex, circulate in society and pre-

sent some few problems of sexual adjustment. Certainly, no other American specialist has done as much as Dr. Robinson to open up sexology to womankind in this country.

The present little book is a good sample of Dr. Robinson's writings. There has long been a decided need for a clear and rational statement of the bearings of modern sexology on the age-old problem of prostitution. Most of the recent writings on this subject have shown little sympathetic insight. They have been motivated by a fierce and emotional hatred of prostitution. Some of our ardent exponents of free love have denounced prostitution on the ground that all women should be accessible to the amorous pursuits of the male. At the other extreme we find organizations like the American Social Hygiene Association and the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church which demand the absolute extinction of prostitution on the ground that any sexual relations outside the connubial couch are vile and sinful.

Dr. Robinson presents a calm survey of the nature and causes of prostitution in the setting of modern civilization. If he were to sit down and plot out an ideal society there would be no prostitutes in it, for he would create individuals and social situations which would make it unnecessary. But he is realistic enough to recognize that we must deal with the problem in the light of the conditions produced by fallible humanity in an imperfect stage of social evolution. Hence he asks what prostitution is; what

makes it possible; and what we can do about it here and now. As should be the case, he abandons all the hoary pre-conceptions that hamstring most writers on the subject and considers the problem exclusively from the standpoint of the well-being of society. He takes the position that, for the time being, prostitution will persist and render a valuable social service. It should be purged of all compulsion—not only the compulsion of physical force but the compulsion of adverse economic circumstances—and should be rid of all dangers, especially those of venereal disease. He demolishes the traditional dogma that this latter aspiration is impossible by calling attention to the remarkable strides in preventive medicine and prophylaxis and shows that we are already able to eliminate venereal disease from the picture if we are willing to give up the silly theological dogmas which obstruct the progress of education in prophylactic methods. This topples over the corner-stone of the moral philosophy of the American Social Hygiene Association. He further shows that hygiene and safety can come in only in proportion as we legalize prostitution and recognize it as serving to-day a valuable social function.

In due time the progress of civilization may eliminate many of the conditions which to-day perpetuate this ancient profession, but in the meantime—for another century or more—we shall have to deal with the issue, and it is about time that we faced about and looked over the whole field from a sane and

secular point of view. After all, just when does prostitution begin and end? Is a girl who gives her favors for apples and candy a prostitute? Is an actress who travels throughout the western world with a great banker and accepts an endowed theatre a prostitute? Must the practice keep within certain pecuniary limits to be accurately defined as such? Is an unmarried woman who supports herself through the contributions of one man less of a prostitute than one who depends upon the contributions of many?

One venerable illusion in particular has Dr. Robinson laid at rest, namely, Lombroso's view that the prostitute is the female criminal—a born, biological changeless and non-reformable type. He proves that there is plenty of evidence that prostitutes reform and make excellent wives, and presents some interesting cases in support of this view. He here agrees with what Mencken pointed out years ago in his *In Defense of Women*, namely, that the Baltimore investigation revealed the fact that the majority of prostitutes married, and that one of them married the richest banker in the city and became a famous social leader in the town.

We commend Dr. Robinson's book to all who desire to have an objective, dependable and sensible survey of one of the most persistent social and human problems of which history affords any record. If his views could be applied they would accomplish more good in a decade than all the repressive bullying and black-jacking of theological and juristic fanatics have ever been able to achieve.

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PART I

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

THERE are phenomena in our social life which are to be dealt with in only one of two ways: they are either not to be approached at all but left alone, untouched, with the frank acknowledgment that in our present state of civilization, morals and intelligence those phenomena are a *noli me tangere;* or they are to be approached courageously, examined boldly from every angle, without any preconceived notions, and with a firm determination to let the conclusions be whatever they may.

Prostitution is one of such phenomena. And unless we can examine it with the same objectivity that we approach and study a chemical problem, a physical difficulty or an epidemic disease, our conclusions will be vitiated and our investigation will have been worse than useless.

Few people can approach the subject which

is now under discussion without religious, moralistic or emotional bias. If you wish to convince yourself of the truth of this statement, ask anybody the fundamental question: IS prostitution an evil? The persons questioned will at once begin to see red. That prostitution is a terrible evil is taken to be so axiomatic that the mere posing of the question is considered not only futile, but vicious, perverse, immoral. Almost without exception (the "almost" could *almost* be left out), those who discuss the subject of prostitution consider ways of abolishing it, limiting it, regulating it, punishing it, handicapping it in various ways, but the fact of its being an unalloyed evil is taken for granted, needing no discussion.

Now, we do not say that prostitution is not an evil; perhaps in the course of our investigation we will reach the conclusion that prostitution is an unmitigated evil, without any redeeming features; perhaps we will reach the conclusion that it has some good features in it which outweigh the evil ones; perhaps we will reach the conclusion that *per se* it is no evil

at all, but that it is being made evil because of our stupid and brutal attitude toward it; perhaps we will reach the conclusion that it ought to be suppressed by all means; perhaps we will arrive at the decision that its suppression if feasible would lead to more and greater evils than its existence. In short we are willing to investigate the subject and abide by the results of our investigation. But this is the last thing that the average man is willing to do. "To question the evil of prostitution—you might as well question and analyze the evils of burglary or murder." Thus a man who is known as a liberal and who boasts of his freedom from all prejudices and superstitions. When we tried to show him that the three were not crimes of the same character, that at the worst prostitution was a vice, and that there was a fundamental difference between a vice and a crime, he became as excited as Edmund Burke at the mention of the French Revolution, and asked to drop the subject *which could not be discussed, because there were no two sides to it.* I told him that just when an opinion appeared absurd and outrageous,

then it was the opponent's duty to examine it, to analyze it calmly. And only if after a careful analysis it still appeared absurd and outrageous should it be rejected. But he was too wrought up to listen to any argument. It reminded me of what Mr. Trotter so well said in *Instincts of the Herd,* that when "we find ourselves entertaining an opinion about the basis of which there is a quality of feeling which tells us that to inquire into it would be absurd, obviously unnecessary, unprofitable, undesirable, bad form, or wicked, we may know then that that opinion is a non-rational one, and probably, therefore, founded upon inadequate evidence." It would be a good thing for every intelligent man and woman to ponder the above paragraph and to reread it at frequent intervals.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCOPE OF THIS ESSAY

It goes without saying that within the space of a brief essay the subject of prostitution cannot be considered in all its phases, in all its details. To do that would require an encyclopedic volume. We can however discuss its *practical* aspects, those points which are of importance to us if we wish to be able to deal with the subject intelligently and humanely. The story of temple prostitution in Babylon, the prices paid to the inmates of the lupanars in ancient Rome, the special dress and insignia worn by the prostitutes in the middle ages, and numerous other facts, are all very interesting; but they cannot help us to solve the problem of the "social evil" of today. To do this we must study the question as it confronts us today.

We shall discuss in detail the causes of prostitution—why men patronize prostitutes and why women continue to engage in the oldest

of professions in spite of all the disdain and the penalties connected with it. This is an important part of the subject, because it is only by realizing the causes that we can know if prostitution can be abolished, and if its abolition would be desirable.

The first thing the modern physician does in trying to cure or mitigate disease is to find out its causes.—Then we shall try to learn what kind of person the prostitute is. There is no class of people about whom more nonsense has been spoken and written than about "the eternal priestess of humanity blasted for the sins of the people." Then, though prophecies are dangerous things, we shall state the future of prostitution, as we see it, basing ourselves upon its past history and particularly on unmistakable present indications.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CAUSES OF PROSTITUTION

WHAT is the Cause of Prostitution? Why do women engage in it? Why do men patronize it? These three questions could be answered with one three-letter monosyllable: Sex. And the answer would not be a facetious evasion. It would be true and all-inclusive. Exterminate sex and prostitution will be completely blotted out, and there will be no prostitution problem. But as exterminating sex would be a rather large order, being exactly equivalent to blotting out the human race, we will have to look at the question from a different angle; and look into its various phases. To the general question: "What is the cause of prostitution?" the answer as given above is the correct one: sex. The fundamental cause of prostitution is the existence of the sex instinct and the imperative need of its satisfaction. But the reasons why women and men indulge in just that form of sexual satisfaction need elucidation.

1. Why do women engage in prostitution? Many answers are given to this question—the economic factor is as a rule specially stressed—but one answer is almost invariably missing. That answer is: Some women engage in prostitution because they *love* that profession, because they like it above all others, and because they would not exchange it for any other occupation or position in life. There are strongly sexed women who know—some of them from experience—that no one man could ever satisfy them, and even if such a virile man could be found, they need and they enjoy the variety, the frequent change. As one English Miss told us, she would not exchange her position for that of the queen of England. How else could she get five or six and, if she wanted, eight or ten different men every day? And some women, she assured us, have relations with as many as twenty and thirty men a day. These are the "pure" prostitutes; they indulge in prostitution for its own sake, and do not give it up even when their savings would permit them to live leisurely, respectable lives. While there are nymphomaniac women among

them of the Messalina type, they constitute but a small percentage. The rest are merely very strongly sexed women. Not every strongly sexed woman is a nymphomaniac; no more than every strongly sexed man is a satyr.

2. The next type comprises those normally sexed women who find it impossible to gratify their sex urge otherwise; that is, women who have been unable to get a husband or a lover. It does not mean, of course, that all women who are unable to marry or find a friend, engage in prostitution; if this were the case there would not be so many virginal old maids in every civilized country; but it does mean that many women doomed to celibacy enter the ranks of prostitution if there are other contributing factors, economic and environmental. In the first type described, the sex instinct is the sole or paramount factor; in this type it is one of the factors; bad environmental conditions and economic considerations are contributing causes.

3. Another cause for female prostitution is *Homosexuality.* Many women enter houses of prostitution in order to be able to satisfy their

lesbian urge. Contrary to the general opinion, held even by experienced sexologists, we maintain that homosexuality is much more common among women than it is among men. The reason the contrary impression prevails is because among women kisses, caresses and embraces excite less attention than they do among men; then there are no laws against female homosexuality in any country and therefore such cases do not come to public notice as scandals among men do; and because homosexual women can and often do indulge in heterosexual relations, and thus their true sexual condition is concealed. For a homosexual man it is much more difficult to engage in heterosexual relations than it is for a homosexual woman. The reason for this is twofold: first, a great many more women than men are bisexual, so that heterosexual intercourse is not repugnant to them; and, second, even if it is, they, being passive, can much more easily conceal their repugnance. While for a homosexual man it is, aside from repugnance, often *physically* impossible to have heterosexual relations.

Leaving aside the question of the relative proportion of genuine congenital homosexuality and so-called pseudo- or acquired homosexuality, the fact remains that a considerable number of women can find their sexual satisfaction only in tribadism or lesbian practices; and it is a further well-known fact that among prostitutes these practices are exceedingly common; some claim, to the extent of fifty per cent. No reliable, verifiable statistics are obtainable, but these are the impressions of people who investigated the subject,—and who base their opinion on the statements of the prostitutes themselves.

4. We now come to an important cause, which deserves discussion in some detail—the economic cause, in other words, though not synonymously, poverty. It would be absurd to deny, as some woman-haters, like Dr. Eberhardt for instance, have lately been trying to do, that bad economic environment, hopeless poverty, lack of food, clothing and shelter is often the direct factor that pushes woman into prostitution. But the importance of this factor must not be exaggerated. The fact that such

a large contingent of prostitutes comes from the ranks of domestic service speaks against hunger and lack of shelter being the only cause of prostitution. That chamber-maids receiving fair wages, good food and a comfortable room leave it all in order to enter on the uncertain and unsafe path of prostitution shows that there must be another underlying, impelling cause.

Not all the pathetic stories, that we find in novels, of "pure" women being forced into prostitution by hunger, are fictitious and fantastic. Some are true to life. We know of a case of a young woman abandoned by her brutal husband without a cent who had been living on practically nothing for three days and to whom the landlady said that she would find the door of her room closed to her unless she brought the week's rent. She was all alone in the great city and the horror of walking the streets in a cold night, and perhaps being arrested as a vagrant, was too much for her; she went out, got a man and brought back a week's rent; but she soon found some sort of position, which though lamentable enough helped her to

keep body and soul together; and it is only when she was out of work and was starving that she made use of this occasional prostitution—a practice, by the way, most common in Paris, and made use of, when in a pinch, by thousands and thousands of respectable, hard-working girls.

We know of another case where a girl of eighteen, a mother of an illegitimate child, entered a house of prostitution in order to be able to bring up the child properly; she refused to put it into a foundling asylum. She had been a foundling herself and knew what it meant. And she could find no other job which would support her and the baby.

Another case is that of a woman in the thirties who entered the ranks of prostitution in order to support her sister's three children who were left orphans. Only as a prostitute could she earn enough to send the children to school and to bring them up properly in a different town from where she lived. Here it was not exactly poverty in the narrow sense; for herself she could have earned enough in a shop or as a saleswoman; but it was only by

prostitution that she could make enough to bring up three children properly and respectably. That woman, by the way, was a religious Catholic, but she reached the conclusion that her sins would be forgiven her in view of the use she made of her earnings; she thought it would be a greater sin to throw her dead sister's children into the street and let them go to the bad.

Poverty, as stated, does play a great rôle as a factor in prostitution; but most of the time it is not crass, haggard poverty; it is rather a desire for ease, for material comfort, for pretty clothes, for freedom from the shop and factory, from domestic service. As a French friend told us, on passing a department store: those silk stockings that you see in the window are responsible for as many cases of prostitution as any other factor you can think of. What applies to silk stockings applies of course to other articles of woman's apparel.—Whether a biologic instinct dating from the dawn of womandom or whether it is because they see that when well dressed they are more attractive to men, the fact is that women—most women—

have a deeply rooted love for pretty clothes. And pretty clothes are expensive. The wages and salaries received by women are often insufficient to procure them; and hence the recourse to "occasional" prostitution to help them make ends meet. This is true not only of working and shop girls—it is true of a very large number of married women. They wish to be well dressed, their husbands do not earn enough to afford to dress them according to the changes in fashion, and so they go to assignation houses where they earn sometimes considerable sums, and thus relieve the husband from financial worries. Such women are not *necessarily* vicious; they may love their husbands sincerely and they may be excellent, devoted mothers.

5. Another type of respectable married woman who visits assignation houses and engages in occasional prostitution is the woman who is strongly or even only normally sexed but whose husband is impotent. She may love him and not wish to leave him because she does not wish to cause him any pain; or she may not want to break up the house on account of the

children, and so she engages in occasional prostitution which she considers less troublesome, less fraught with possible consequences than taking a lover. They do not refuse the money which their indulgences bring them; but money is not their primary motive. As we know, the motives of most of our actions are not single and simple but multiple and complex.

6. There are many minor causes. So, some are doomed to prostitution, so to say, from infancy. They grow up in a *milieu* where they see prostitution practiced right before them, from their earliest childhood. The mother, the sisters practice it, and they are initiated into it as soon as they have reached the age of semi-maturity, the age of twelve or thirteen. Cases are known where mothers have forced their young daughters, girls of fourteen or so, to go out into the streets and bring them the money. Seduction and abandonment, or seduction followed by a mock or real marriage and compulsion to prostitution at the hands of brutish men, are also occasional direct causes. Weak will, timidity and ignorance do sometimes put some women under the dominion of

unscrupulous men so that, afraid of their lives, they obey them like slaves. Now and then a daughter who has made a misstep has the doors of her parents' home and of relatives and friends closed against her, and in her condition of economic misery and spiritual despair she either commits suicide or goes what the people call to the dogs, i.e., joins the ranks of prostitution. And now and then there is the case of a self-sacrificing daughter who, unable to witness the grinding poverty in the parental home, the hungry, ragged and barefoot little brothers and sisters, the fights over every penny, and without any hope of amelioration, leaves the parental roof, goes to another city, and enters the "profession" with the deliberate purpose of helping the family, and giving the brothers and sisters a chance in life.

To summarize: Women engage in prostitution because some find in it the only way in which they can satisfy their sexual urge; and others because they are encouraged or driven to it by economic conditions. But the phrase "economic conditions" must be taken in its broadest sense, comprising the whole milieu,

the bringing up, the bad housing conditions in which several men and women occupy the same room, brutish parents, bad example, and the ostentations and wasteful luxury of the rich. A not inconsiderable number enter for the purpose of saving up money—which they couldn't do in any other occupation—so that they may get married with a dowry, buy a farm or a little store and live a virtuous, respectable life. They are the temporary prostitutes, and may be placed between the occasional and the permanent ones.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHY MEN PATRONIZE PROSTITUTES

1. WHAT else can many men do? The sex instinct is fully awakened at the age of fifteen; few men can in our stage of civilization marry before the age of twenty-five; many professional men cannot do so before thirty. What can they do in the meantime—a period of ten or fifteen years during which the sex urge is at its highest point? Complete abstinence? A few, very few manage it. Masturbation? A great many indulge in this most unsatisfactory substitute, sometimes to their permanent hurt. Get a lady friend, a married woman? Only a small percentage have the chance. And so the largest percentage of young men in all civilized communities is forced to have recourse to prostitution in order to satisfy their purely physical sexual urge.

2. We said "purely physical sexual urge." This is true of a certain number of men; it is not true of all men. Some men look for some-

thing more in the house of prostitution or in the private prostitute's bedchamber than mere satisfaction of a physical urge. They look for romance, for poetry, for caresses, for affection, yes, even for a simulacrum, poor as it is, of love. They do not get those things, they are alone in the world; and unable to get the genuine thing, they try to get some substitute; the satisfaction is not complete, but some satisfaction is better than none. And it is a mistake to think that there is never any affection or mutual sympathy between the girl and the man. On the side of the man it may be quite genuine, and even on the side of the woman it is not always a venal imitation. Getting paid does not ipso facto exclude the possibility of genuine affection. Are we sure that genuine love is in every case perfectly selfless, uninfluenced by any benefits received or expected?

3. Houses of prostitution and individual prostitutes claim that at least half of their clients are married men. The exact percentage will of course never be known, but we are inclined to believe that the estimate is near the truth. Physicians who specialize in the treat-

ment of venereal diseases will tell you that their contingent of married patients is respectably large. Why do married men patronize prostitutes? There can be no question here of satisfying a purely sexual need. The answer to this question as to all questions dealing with the subject of prostitution must be frank and unequivocal, distasteful as it may be to some. The reason why so many married men patronize prostitutes is because man is by nature polygamous; the primitive sex instinct is one of variety or promiscuity, all claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Many men have by the aid of *mores,* religion, ethical code and social pressure succeeded in so repressing this primitive instinct that they are practically unaware—or think they are—of its existence. Others, while well aware of its existence, can overcome it. And still others simply *cannot* resist it, and it is they who have recourse to the prostitute or the mistress. On some the monogamic monotony has such a depressing effect that with their wives they lose both their libido and their potency, while they are quite potent and libidinous with other women.

And here is a curious and important fact, which we have encountered several times in our practice, and which, if we are not mistaken, has not been called attention to before: Some men who have lost all desire for their wives, who in fact cannot bring themselves—neither psychically nor *physically*—to have any sexual relations with them, regain both their marital desire and their power after having indulged in relations with other women. And this is a real service that the *puella* renders the legitimate wife. *She often renders the monogamous marriage bearable;* and far from being a menace to the stability of the family, she is not infrequently its most effective cement.

Some critics of our social-moral code claim that our system of compulsory monogamic marriage is the sole or the principal cause of prostitution. This is not so. But that it is one of the causes, there is not the slightest doubt.

4. Among the many minor reasons why married men patronize prostitutes, the desire for limiting one's family plays an important rôle. There are still many families who are not familiar with any means of prevenception, and

so in order to avoid having too many children, the man goes outside to satisfy his sexual needs —not infrequently with the wife's consent, sometimes at her urgent insistence. We know personally of many such cases.

5. Another cause is the wife's ill-health, either general, such as cardiac disease which makes intercourse dangerous for her, or local, such as disease of the cervix, which makes sexual relations disagreeable and dangerous for him. Here again we have known cases where the wife, knowing what bad effect abstinence had on the husband, urged him to go outside.

6. We have stated in the first paragraph of this section that many men patronize prostitutes because they are obliged to remain unmarried for many years after their sex instinct has attained full maturity; some remain bachelors for life because they cannot find the proper companion or because their economic condition does not permit. But it must be expressly stated that there is quite a considerable number of men *who do not wish* to marry in spite of the fact that their economic condition may be excellent, in spite of the fact that they

love women, and even in spite of the fact that they may have found a woman who greatly appeals to them. Simply they are not marrying men. The idea of a permanent, practically indissoluble union terrifies them. They feel they do not care for a home and they are frightened at the idea of the responsibility for children. We might state here *en passant* that the reproductive instinct is a myth. There is a sex instinct and its exercise is generally followed by offspring, but this is a fortuitous and very often most undesired consequence. Such men elect to remain bachelors, getting their sexual satisfaction from chance *puellæ* or more or less permanent mistresses. Some men avoid even the latter; they want no ties of any kind; they fear their interference with their work; and they avoid a free love union as much as they do a legal marriage; perhaps even more; because they know that the *free ties,* just because they are free and not imposed by law, not accompanied by any threats of alimony, are sometimes more binding than the legal wedlock ties. They want to be and remain free. To them the puella publica is irreplaceable.

Such people will be placarded with the epithet "egotists." Probably they are. But just because they are egotists it is better they should become neither husbands nor fathers, and that they should be permitted to satisfy their sex urge without perhaps lamentable consequences to anybody. Whether society needs to furnish such people with the means of sexual satisfaction will be left an open question.

7. We have refrained and shall refrain from expressing any moral judgment, from pronouncing any ethical approval or condemnation. For in this essay we are merely stating facts, and nothing but facts, with all the objectivity of which we are capable. And here we must state another fact which no doubt many will consider most deplorable. The fact we wish to state is this: There are a *great many men* who love the prostitute just for her own sake; love her crude, coarse, vulgar and obscene; and the more emphasized these characteristics, the greater the attraction they feel for her. And it would be a great error to imagine that it is only coarse, vulgar men who

demand coarseness and vulgarity in their temporary female partner. Quite the contrary is often the case: it is the coarse man who will look for the delicate gentle type, and it is the refined, esthetic, poetical, romantic young man, —young, middle-aged or old—who will demand the coarse, uncultured woman, one who is nothing but a female. The man just described may even have a fine, daintily beautiful wife whom he adores and from whose head he would not let a hair fall, and yet he feels the need now and then to quench his atavistic instinct with a woman whom he perhaps despises.*— Perhaps it is the awakening of an atavistic, primitive instinct; perhaps it is the outbreak, an exacerbation of a dormant passion in which the cultured man feels the need of stripping himself of all the restraints and trammels of civilization and of becoming just a male (or a male brute, if you prefer); whatever it may be, the fact is undeniable that some of our most delicate poets, our sublime writers, artists and scientists have now and then felt the need of giving vent to their sex urge in an unrestrained

* The same, vice versa, is true of some women.

manner, of "wallowing in the slime of sensuality," as some moralists would express it.

8. And here is a fact still more strange. There are some men who never can have or enjoy sexual relations except with *puellæ publicæ*. It is not only the manipulations and the *ars amandi* of the latter, in which respectable women are uninstructed; it is the very knowledge that many men had relations with the woman before and are going to have after that acts as a necessary stimulus, that give the man the otherwise lacking filip. Just as we have the contrary type, namely men who can never have relations with prostitutes, because the knowledge that many men had been there before fills them with a nauseating disgust. So do men differ in their sexual tastes. And yet there are those who would make one draconian, iron-clad law for all men.

9. There are men who could get married, but won't because there is some hereditary disease in their family, such as epilepsy or insanity. They will not take the risk of transmitting the disease to their offspring, and their prospective partner does not wish to marry if she

cannot have any children. So they remain single throughout life. What should such men do? In their case the prostitute fills a real want. She is not injured, nobody is, he is benefited and there are no hereditarily tainted children to vitiate the racial stock.

10. Again, there are men who unfortunately have nothing attractive about them. They may be hunchbacks. They may have some other unpleasant deformity. They may not be able to inspire love in any woman, and they may have nothing to offer her. Such men are forced to go through life single. And for the good of the race it is better it should be so; to such men the *puella* is a blessing; for otherwise they would have to go through life completely abstinent. The question whether it is right that there should exist a class of women ready to satisfy the sexual needs of unpleasant and repulsive men is not now under discussion. We are simply pointing out the service that prostitution renders the male half of humanity and are enumerating the types of men who make use of and are benefited by that service. These facts it is necessary to bear in mind when dis-

cussing the likelihood and the desirability of abolishing prostitution.

11. *Sexual Impotence.* This will no doubt seem strange at first glance. Sexual impotence in men as a cause of prostitution? Yes, and there are thousands of men who go to prostitutes solely because they are afflicted with sexual impotence. As we have shown elsewhere, by far the largest percentage of cases of sexual impotence consists in premature ejaculation—*ejaculatio præcox* and *ejaculatio precipitata.* A man who is suffering with this form of sexual weakness has not on that account lost his libido. It may even be accentuated. *He* derives satisfaction from sexual intercourse, but he cannot satisfy his partner. What is such a man to do? He abstains from marriage for two reasons: he may be too honorable to marry a girl whom he knows he can never satisfy sexually; and when honor is not the guiding motive, fear is. He fears that his future wife, unable to get sexual satisfaction from him, will seek it elsewhere. And men hate the idea of being "betrayed," of becoming cuckolds. The latter consideration also causes him to refrain from tak-

ing a mistress, from entering into what the French call a liaison or the Germans a Verhältnis. To attempt relations with respectable girls, with friends and acquaintances, is altogether out of the question. For a respectable girl or a friend who receives no money or other material consideration for her sexual favors, expects at least perfect virility, complete sexual satisfaction. And this he cannot give her. He has therefore but one outlet: the puella publica. With her he need have no scruples, need feel no embarrassment. It is immaterial to her whether he is virile or impotent (she often prefers the latter), she has no pretensions and makes no demands. And any puella will tell you that the percentage of partially or *completely* impotent men who visit them is a very large one. For it is a fact that even completely impotent men, those who have entirely lost the potentia erigendi, and even the libido, visit prostitutes; for it is only there they can get some satisfaction which they could not get elsewhere.

12. *Excessive Virility.* A much less frequent cause than impotence is excessive virility.

There are men blessed or cursed with such excessive libido and potentia that one woman, be it their wife or mistress, does not suffice them. Just as there are women whom no one man can satisfy, so there are men whom no one woman can satisfy. And if the wife happens to be normally or even subnormally sexed, the man considers himself justified in seeking satisfaction elsewhere, and the simplest solution for him is the individual puella or the house of prostitution where he can indulge to his heart's content without any objections being made or protests raised. As is well known, some prostitutes are beyond the stage of feeling any orgasm and those can indulge an almost indefinite number of times in the sexual act without any feeling of fatigue or exhaustion.—

Sexual Perversions. Some men, as we know, are slaves to sexual perversions, some of a most bizarre character, and they visit houses of prostitution because it is only there that they can satisfy those perversions. Some of them are so repulsive in character that only hardened puellæ will agree to practice them for high fees. Some of them, like *spinteriæ,* can only be

practiced in brothels, where there are a number of inmates.—But this is not one of the legitimate functions of prostitution; rather it is one of its evils, one of its poisonous excrescences, and we do not number it among the factors which make of prostitution a useful, a necessary, or an unavoidable, social phenomenon.

To summarize briefly: Men patronize prostitution because they possess a normal sex instinct which because of our social-economic conditions and moral code they can satisfy in no other way, and because that instinct has, in many men, retained its strongly polygamous, not to say promiscuous character.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT SORT OF A PERSON IS THE PROSTITUTE?

We must at the outset rid ourselves of and throw overboard the Lombrosian nonsense about the "born prostitute," with her physical stigmata of degeneration and *inborn* ethical defects. According to this savant who, in spite of his monumental erudition and indefatigable zeal, was responsible for numerous bizarre, untenable theories, prostitutes, like poets, are born, not made. They present, he claims, numerous stigmata of degeneration, among which the most frequent are irregularities and anomalies of the teeth, abnormal distribution of the hair, prominent ears, asymmetry of the face and even cleft palate! We must declare that among all the prostitutes that we have treated and known we have not noticed any of the above anomalies or stigmata of degeneration. But assuming that Lombroso did meet them among some of those he had

known, what of it? Aren't irregular teeth, prominent ears, etc., met with among all classes of women, among salesgirls, school teachers, stenographers, respectable married women or even—nuns? For stigmata to be the pathognomonic characteristic of a certain class, the entire class or a very large percentage of it must possess them and they must be absent in other classes. This is of course not so, and therefore Lombroso's physical stigmata are just nonsense.

We now come to the ethical defects or moral stigmata. According to Lombroso, prostitutes are noted for their love of pretty clothes and jewelry, for their greediness, laziness, vanity, untruthfulness, love of food and drink; also, an inclination towards criminality. Leaving the last for a moment, we can only ask: Isn't it silly? As if one had never heard of every one of the above ethical defects or moral stigmata among respectable girls and respectable married women! There are no respectable women who love pretty clothes, who are vain, who are greedy, who dislike to work, who are occasionally untruthful, who love to eat even to glut-

tony—where do you find the obesest women, among the respectables or among the *filles de joie?*—and who like a drop now and then—oh, no, not at all. As to inclination to criminality, this is only true of a small number of the lowest class; and even in them it is not necessarily inborn, but is the result of their precarious life, of their being driven from pillar to post and shamelessly exploited, and of their consequent dependence upon pimps, and other protectors.

In short, the attempt to make a special degenerate or criminal class of the prostitute is nonsensical. The prostitute is in every way equal to the average of the stratum from which she derives. There are coarse, vulgar, tough prostitutes; there are decent, gentle, softhearted women among them; yes, even truly modest ones. There are some conscienceless grafters among them; so there are among respectable women. On the other hand, their charitableness, their care for a sister in distress or when helpless from disease could well be imitated by women in the respectable walks of life. And the support they give their old parents or needy relatives could also be taken as

an example by some women who are proud of their self-righteousness and who consider the prostitute so low a creature that the mere mention of the name gives them a slight shiver (for which shiver, psychanalytically, perhaps another explanation than the usual one could be found). And when they have a child, to what sacrifices they will go in order to bring it up properly and comfortably—unless indeed they kill it with their own hands, in order that when grown up she may not have to live the same life that they are leading.

So much for the prostitute's moral qualities. As to her mental level, we declare emphatically that the statement that all or almost all prostitutes are morons or near-morons is baseless piffle. They are on the average of the same mental and educational level as are the other women of the stratum from which they come. They often seem to be of a decidedly higher intelligence. There are morons among them? Of course there are. So there are among the novitiates of nunneries and religious orders. The percentage of feeble-minded and mentally abnormal individuals among the saints of both

sexes is quite large—still we have never heard anybody declare that feeble-mindedness was an invariable characteristic of sainthood.

And here we will take the liberty to propound a question: If all the prostitutes or even the largest percentage of them are morons or weak-minded, or mentally abnormal, then isn't their occupation the very best that one could think of both for them and for the race? Would it be better for the race if these girls lived and married respectably and transmitted their moronism or mental abnormality to their offspring? Would it? To us it seems that to ask the question is to answer it. But many people won't have it so. And they will go to a great deal of trouble to save those moronic girls from the "pit of iniquity" in order to marry them off and to enrich the race with feeble-minded and mentally abnormal misfits.

We come now to the general physical and the sexual condition of the prostitute. Not only morally and mentally but physically the prostitute has been pictured by, no doubt, well-meaning writers as a most pitiable or even loathsome object. The average length of the

life after entering the profession was four or five years; she was addicted to drugs and alcohol, she was generally sick and almost invariably infected with venereal disease; her appearance was most unattractive, her face, one writer tells us, is generally "bloated," and in her person, another writer tells us, she is "dirty and verminous." How men, except those on the lowest rung of the social ladder and even then only in a state of alcoholic intoxication, could patronize such repulsive creatures, is rather hard to understand; but we will let that pass. We do not suspect the *bona fides* of those writers (though some moralists will "exaggerate" for the sake of a good cause); perhaps such creatures did exist in the past; perhaps they still exist at the present in some places—in the lowest slums, around the docks, in haunts which one cannot visit without risk to limb or life. But as a general picture of the prostitute of today it is false. It is so false that many a respectable woman has the ambition to look like, if not to be taken for, a demimondaine. As a general rule the present-day prostitute takes very good care of her person, ob-

serves dietetic and hygienic rules, shuns drugs and saves money for a rainy day; for some of them expect to change their mode of life, when they get older, for that of a respectable married bourgeoise.

As to venereal infection, we have always protested against the senseless exaggerations, according to which all prostitutes, ninety or one hundred per cent of them, were infected with venereal diseases—one, two or all three of them. The percentage of venereal disease among the controlled or supervised prostitutes is very small—in the neighborhood of two per cent. We have just read a statement that in all the licensed houses of Paris there were found but four cases of syphilis during the entire year. An examination of the thirty inmates of the high class house of prostitution in the Rue Chabanais has not disclosed a single case of venereal disease; not even a suspicious case was discovered. The keepers of those houses are extremely vigilant in this respect, for a case of infection gives the house a black eye and hurts the trade tremendously. On the other hand venereal disease among the clandestine or

occasional prostitutes is quite high—to judge by the result of the batches who are now and then taken in and examined, it reaches about thirty per cent. The reason is easy to understand: practicing clandestinely and occasionally, those girls lack the knowledge and the facilities for proper venereal prophylaxis.

We regret that the limited space of this essay prevents us from discussing the question of segregation and medical supervision, for the subject is an important one.

To summarize: Morally, mentally and physically the prostitute is a normal person, as normal as the average of women in other walks of life. She is neither an abnormal, nor a degenerate nor a criminal. "But for the grace of God there hangs John Bunyan." But for the grace of environment—but it is not necessary to complete the sentence.

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IT AND WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE

We now come to the most important part of our discussion. What shall we do about it all? What shall be our attitude towards prostitution and how shall we deal with the prostitute? And what about the future—is prostitution a permanent institution that will exist forever, or will it, with changing conditions or under concerted repression, disappear altogether?

Let us answer the last question first. It is our well considered opinion that prostitution in some form will exist forever, i.e. as long as the human race exists, unless mankind goes back to utter, unrestrained promiscuity—which is not likely ever to be the case. And our reason for asserting that prostitution in some form will always exist is not because it has always existed. This is the reason of sots and fools. The partisans of war give this reason for their

belief that war will never be abolished: "War has always existed and therefore will always exist." No. War will not always exist because it does not answer any primitive biologic instinct. Cannibalism and slavery and bringing human sacrifices to the gods, the belief in witches, the bubonic plague and smallpox and yellow fever, and many other physical and moral and mental pests, have always existed, and have now practically disappeared from all civilized lands; and so will war disappear.— Those who believe in the eventual complete abolition of prostitution take the examples we have just cited and use them as arguments favoring their belief. "Cannibalism, slavery, the duel, bull-baiting and many other evils have been abolished, though they existed for many, many centuries; and so will prostitution disappear though it has existed from the very dawn of history." Now, let us see. The analogy is a very poor one; it will be seen not to hold at all. Not one of the evils enumerated is rooted in a biologic instinct. People did not feel a physiologic need to eat human flesh; they ate it because they had nothing else to eat (also

because they believed that eating an enemy added to their strength); slavery was not rooted in a physiologic instinct; no more than the desire for profit in commerce is; the duel was an artificial excrescence based on a fictitious sense of honor; and so forth.

Prostitution however is grounded in the most powerful of our elemental instincts; and all attempts at repression, practiced during centuries, have not succeeded in uprooting it. Let us just spend a moment and see what punishment gentle Christians inflicted on the prostitute in an endeavor to make her give up her profession. Here are a few of them: they were exposed at the pillory; they were made to wear a special dress and shameful insignia; with their hands tied behind them and dressed in a ridiculous costume they were thrown from a rock into the water and ducked three times, as they came up. They had their hair burned off; they had in some places their *hands* or *feet* or *ears* or *nose* cut off (!); in some places they were even subject to capital punishment by hanging, beheading or burning at the stake. Add to this the loathing, the disdain, the complete social

ostracism which the women encountered on all sides, add the fear of eternal hellfire of the reality of which they were thoroughly convinced, and you will admit that the discouragements to prostitution in years gone by were severe enough and numerous enough; and yet prostitution was not exterminated, but has kept on flourishing to the present day. There must be some deeper explanation for it than poverty or just the love of vice.

Now, take the man. The punishments of the man patronizing prostitution were not of a legal character; and yet he ran great risks. First, it often went against his deepest religious convictions and moral principles, causing him to suffer afterwards agonies of remorse; he ran the risk of social ostracism; if he was a married man, he ran the risk of having his home broken up, of losing his wife and children; and last but not least, with eyes open, he ran the terrible risk of having his life blighted by venereal infection. Venereal disease was much more prevalent in former years than now, there were no venereal prophylactics in former years, and the treatment of these

diseases was most unsatisfactory. Syphilis was a much graver, much more terrible disease than it is now. And yet men ran all these risks for the mere satisfaction of their "bestial lust" with a public woman. There must be a deeper explanation for it than just "viciousness" or "immorality."

But we need not go to the past for our lesson. The results of our present attempts to extirpate prostitution tell us the same story. The streets of a city can be cleaned of its peripathetes. But that means only driving the trade into underground channels and of spreading illicit relations among women and girls who otherwise would have been immune. And in this connection I cannot refrain from reproducing a passage from a "Report by the New York Headquarters of the Salvation Army" (published June 14, 1926) which is full of significance. It ought to be given wide circulation. It should be carefully pondered by all our abolitionists. Here is what Colonel Margaret Bovil writes:

"Twenty years ago our rescue homes, as they were then called, were always filled with

women of mature age who had deliberately degraded themselves. Many of them were found in establishments in the so-called red-light districts and were induced to enter our institutions as the first step toward a new start in life. Others we used to find and plead with in the backrooms of saloons and still others were taken out of the police courts after they had been arrested for soliciting on the streets. From whatever source we found these women, however, they were, with only a few exceptions, women who had deliberately and consciously chosen what has mistakenly been called 'the easiest way.'

"This is not the situation today. Red-light districts have been done away with largely and so have the saloons with backrooms, and, between the police and the activities of citizens' committees, we have practically eliminated open prostitution on the streets. In spite of these reforms, the Salvation Army in this one territory now has twice the number of maternity homes that it operated in those lurid days of the past and they are all filled to capacity —by whom? Not by professional, deliberate

and conscious violators of the social code, although we still work among that class, too—but by school children, many of whom have been obliged to leave their desks in either the high or elementary grades to go direct to our institutions for the ordeal of motherhood.

"I, myself, have been amazed during the survey just completed to realize the great percentage of our inmates during the last two years who have been school girls. I have known for some time that the number was increasing, but not until the completion of this survey did I realize that it had reached the appalling figure of 42 per cent of our entire work in these institutions.

"The average age of these girls is 16 years. Any intelligent observer will see instantly what this means. To have an average of 16 means that we must have an astounding number of girls who are becoming mothers between the ages of 11 and 14. . . .

"The matron of the Jersey City home reported one case, as an example, of a 13-year old girl who was to have been graduated from grammar school this month. Intensely inter-

ested in her school work, she brought her books with her and asked for permission to devote her evenings to study in order that she would not fall behind her class. She continued her studies as requested until the birth of a baby boy."

Can stronger proof be adduced in support of our contention that the hounding of prostitution has no other result except that of aggravating conditions?

If in spite of all the humiliations, risks, obstacles, atrocious punishments, ostracisms and fear of hell, prostitution has continued unabated up to the present time, it is fair to presume that it will continue to persist in the future; but it will persist not because it always has; it will persist because it satisfies a definite and important biologic need, and answers it in a way that no other *present* arrangement does.

But while it answers a definite need and is therefore to be considered as a pro-social agency, it is not an unmixed good. It carries some evils in its train, which must be eliminated. And they can be eliminated by an intel-

ligent handling of the problem, and by a proper attitude towards the prostitute.

The profession of prostitution must be declared perfectly legal and legitimate; nay, it must be judged as an occupation of public utility; if the idea were not so shocking to those who have not freed their minds of the cobwebs of traditional dogma, we would say that it should be placed among the honorable occupations. If this should be done, there would be an immediate change in the attitude of the puella toward society; treat her like a decent human being and she will behave like a decent human being. Cease hounding, persecuting and humiliating her, give her to understand that as long as she does not offend public decency she has nothing to fear, and she will at once begin to resist the terrible exploitation to which she is subjected on all sides, and she will feel no need of that most loathsome of all creatures —the pimp, cadet, maquereau, Zuhälter or whatever name he bears in different places. She will be in no need of a protector, because she will be in no more danger of being attacked and insulted than are other respectable women.

In his *Le Chemin de Buenos-Ayres* Albert Londres suggests that the Argentine Republic erect a statue to the French prostitute in gratitude for her services to the Argentinians. He wants a prominent place for it—between the statues of Christopher Columbus who discovered the continent and that of St. Martín who gave Argentina liberty. And he promises to come and to pronounce the speech at the dedication of the monument in case the Argentine government should act on his suggestion. This is meant half-humorously, but whether a monument is ever erected to her or not, the truth is that society owes the "priestess of love" a deep apology for the cruelties, the humiliation, the disgrace and the ruthless persecution to which it has subjected her for thousands of years.

The house of prostitution is considered one of the evils of the profession. The inmates are exploited, receiving only a small part of their earnings, they are urged to induce their clients to drink and to drink with them, etc. While the condition of the inmates of the licensed houses is quite different from what it used to be in the past—they are treated with more consider-

ation, have more liberty, are well fed, have good hygienic care, and can leave the house *whenever they wish*—still there is no reason why the houses with their madames or their male proprietors should continue to exist. The new Bremen system should be given a trial. Under this system the Madame or male brothel keeper is outlawed. The girls manage the house themselves, they have no boss, and they keep all the money they earn. They are themselves responsible for their sanitary condition, and they take pretty good care that they do not become infected, and if the misfortune happens, to have themselves properly treated. The same is true of Buenos Ayres, except that there only one woman can occupy a little house; several cannot congregate in the same house.

Where the element of compulsion and penalization is removed, the puella publica is very anxious to treat herself properly and the better type considers it about as dishonorable to infect a client as a respectable woman would to infect her lover or husband.

When one compares the social and economic condition of the prostitute of today and the

public attitude toward her with her condition and the public attitude toward her of a hundred, fifty or even twenty-five years ago, we cannot fail to notice an enormous difference, an unmistakable change for the better. We are therefore fully justified in believing that the improvement will continue progressively until the public attitude towards the oldest, ineradicable, because biologically grounded and physiologically necessary, profession will become quite humane and rational.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY

If we were to summarize what we consider the scientific, rational and humane attitude we would say: Prostitution is not an immoral, criminal or anti-social occupation. It should therefore be made perfectly legal and should be considered as legitimate an occupation as any other. As the occupation carries with it certain dangers to public health, it should be subject to sanitary control (sanitary, not police), the same as are some other trades, endangering public health. The prostitute is just the same sort of human being that her sister is. Morally, mentally and physically, she differs very little from the average of the stratum from which she springs. To treat her decently and humanely is not only the decent and humane thing, but it is socially necessary, because the better the prostitute is treated, and the more self-respect she gains, the more pro-

socially she will act, the less of a menace and a danger will she be. This will go on progressively until all her dangerous features have disappeared, and she will have ceased to be a menace at all; and the phrase "the social evil," as a synonym for prostitution, will then disappear from our vocabulary, as the fact itself, having undergone a complete metamorphosis for the better, will have disappeared from our social life. It will be there, yet it will be something quite different. If you find some contradiction in this statement, make the most of it. The Greek hetaira and the present-day degraded prostitute are essentially the same—they serve the same fundamental purpose; yet they are something quite different.

PART II

CHAPTER EIGHT

TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDING

In the opening paragraph of this essay we stated that certain questions should be either left entirely alone or approached courageously, examined from every angle, with a firm determination to let the conclusions be what they may. Whether a person can completely free himself from all his predilections, divest himself of all bias in discussing a question, we do not know. But we do know that at least we have tried to; and we further know that we have stated our conclusions frankly, openly, without any mental reservations or evasions. And yet we cannot stop here, without some additional remarks. We cannot stop because people are stupid or malicious. And in their stupidity or malice, they will misinterpret or deliberately pervert your meaning, and ascribe ideas to you which your mind never entertained, accuse you of opinions which have al-

ways been repugnant to you. And therefore we must repeat, clarify and emphasize in order not to leave them any loophole.

One of the commonest faults of the crooked-minded is to accuse anyone who describes a fact of being in favor of that fact. Because one describes cancer and asserts that cancer will be with us for a long, long time it does not follow that that man is in favor of cancer. We do not consider prostitution as great a plague as cancer, nor do we put it on the same level with stealing, arson and murder, as some of our medieval moralists do, but we should certainly be most happy to witness a disappearance of all those factors which make prostitution a necessity—or a necessary evil if you will. What we do object to, and this is something which the crooked and pervert-minded do not seem to be able to grasp, is the hounding of the prostitute and the attempted suppression of prostitution, without any concomitant attempts to change, ameliorate or abolish the conditions which *at the present time* render prostitution a necessary, pro-social and indispensable phenomenon.

That our stand on prostitution would meet with abhorrent antagonism on the part of the theologians, medieval or modern, and would call forth opposition even in the sincere and liberal-minded sex reformers as represented, for instance, by The American Social Hygiene Association, is to be expected. We should consider it a Sisyphus' task to attempt to convert them to our viewpoint. We ourself once believed the way they do, and we know the emotional affect connected with the subject, an affect which it is quite hopeless to overcome in a conversation, a letter, or a debate. It takes years to induce a change in a man's outlook on things sexual. But what seems at first glance surprising is that confirmed and boasting varietists, people who believe in unlimited promiscuity, should get emotionally wrought up over our standpoint on the subject. But a dear friend, a sane radical—there are still a few sane radicals left—explained it as follows: "In your attitude you touch on a very sensitive complex. They would like to be able to fornicate with any woman they meet in the street, while you propose to limit extramarital rela-

tions to a limited number of esthetic and sanitary women who have selected this mode of life of their own free will, and who see nothing wrong in getting paid for their services." Yes, we believe that the obligation to pay plays a considerable rôle in the promiscuous varietist's opposition to prostitution. He prefers to seduce young, immature females and have relations with them free of charge; and he can save his self-respect by rationalizing his purely animal sex desire into "pure love."

Some of the opponents of prostitution, feminists particularly, object to women being "forced" to serve as mere vessels for men, and cannot refer to the prostitute otherwise than "slave." But where does the slavery come in, if the profession is chosen freely, and can be left at will? As we stated elsewhere: *Prostitution is neither criminal nor immoral. But it goes without saying, that this refers to prostitution practiced freely, voluntarily, willingly. There must not be the slightest coercion, the faintest pressure applied, no matter from what source. Any force, physical, financial, moral, is crimi-*

nal to the utmost degree, and should be punished accordingly."

If prostitution is free, engaged in voluntarily, of one's free choice, without any pressure from any source, the person being free to leave it at will, where does the "slavery" come in?

CHAPTER NINE

SYMPATHY FOR WOMANHOOD

We have been accused of writing like a dominant or domineering male; that we seem to consider the man's side only, showing no consideration for the woman. The best and most effective answer to this stupid accusation could be given by the two hundred thousand women who have read the author's Woman: Her Sex and Love Life, and the half-million—probably nearer a million because each copy of a book is generally read by several people—who have read and received hope and encouragement from our Birth Control or The Limitation of Offspring. The thousands and thousands of women who apply to us for help and guidance in their domestic problems can also bring their individual little testimonies, and a mighty high mountain those testimonies would make. In fact, the usual accusation against us in the past by men has been that we are too mushy

and sentimental where women are concerned, that we honor them too much, are always on their side, and always give them right. "Always" is not true, but it is true that, *ceteris paribus,* we are more inclined to favor the woman, as being *usually* the weaker, the more defenseless party, doomed to bear the heavier burden.

No, we need not try to prove our genuinely sympathetic attitude towards womanhood. We have proved it by thirty years of active work—both literary and professional and purely humanitarian. But we claim to be a *sane* radical; we are neither a medieval theologian nor a lecherous Don-Juanesque varietist; we believe in the greatest good for *all,* and where this is impossible, the greatest good for the greatest number, and it is this deeply rooted belief, on which we have acted all our life, that leads us to the conclusions that we have enunciated in this essay.

It is not callousness, but deep understanding sympathy with womanhood that has been the guiding motive in all our sexologic writings. Of one failing, we believe, we have been par-

ticularly free, and that is the weakness of permitting our wishes to be the fathers of our thoughts. As much as any objective, rational thinker have we believed with Bossuet that the worst form of madness is to believe that events will occur in accordance with our wishes—believed it and guarded against it.

CHAPTER TEN

MARRIAGE, PROSTITUTION AND FREE LOVE

We have been accused by some of our arch-free lovers and ultra-varietists of admitting but two forms of sex life: marriage and prostitution. How anyone who claims to be familiar with our writings can make such an accusation is past understanding. Time and again we have stated that where there is no love, there the magistrate's license or the priest's pronouncement does not make it so. While where there is mutual love and an *intention* of greater or lesser permanency, then it is as true a marriage as if it had been celebrated in the most gorgeous church in Christendom. Some of the finest households we have known have been free unions. True, we maintain, as we always have, that under *our present social conditions* it is fairer to the woman one loves, and particularly so if there is a possibility of there being any children, to undergo some form of marriage ceremony—except where the woman emphat-

ically objects and refuses any sort of "chain" (such women are not many, but they exist, we have known some personally). We repeat, it is fairer to the woman one claims to love to make some public and legally valid acknowledgment of the union. It may be but some sort of civil ceremony or registration. But if our ultra-varietist objects to it, and wants to have a different woman every day, or to live with several at the same time, he is quite welcome to his promiscuity. We will not permit him to convert this world of ours into a free for all whorehouse. We will not give him our blessing, we do not even promise him not to despise him, not to shun him, not to exclude him from our society, but we shall in no way interfere with him, for "the sex life of two adults—or several—is their affair and their affair only." We said, we shall not interfere with him—provided he does not use persuasive seduction, and there is seduction aside from the coarse old-fashioned promise to marry, and provided he does not impregnate a number of young, immature girls, leaving them to sink or swim.

In conclusion: We hold these ideas not because we have held them for twenty-five years; on the contrary, our opinions on many subjects have undergone considerable modification, in some instances even a radical change (compare, for instance, our ideas on bolshevism ten years ago and now); and so have many of our sex ideas. But we hold them and maintain them because we have arrived at them after careful thought, and basing ourself on long and varied practice and experience in different parts of the world. If men with greater knowledge and greater experience will prove to us that we are wrong, we shall not have the slightest hesitation in changing our opinions partly or completely, as the case may demand. We are not chained to any belief, we are not wedded to any creed.

And in final conclusion: We challenge any sexologist, any man who has given the subject real study, to point out a single misstatement, a single fact which is not a fact, and to shatter a single one of our arguments.

PART III

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A PROSTITUTE BECOME A RESPECTABLE WOMAN?

We may as well answer here as elsewhere the questions often directed to us concerning the rehabilitation of the prostitute. Can a girl (or woman) who has practiced prostitution, privately and secretly, or openly and publicly, ever become a respectable woman? Can such a woman, if she marries, become a good, faithful, honest wife, and a devoted mother, who is either quite indifferent or has even an aversion to, a horror of her former occupation? To these questions our answer is: Yes. How do we know? Because we have known several such cases ourself, and we have heard of several others from credible, intelligent men and women. "But this is not scientific! A few cases of your own and a few from hearsay do not constitute valid statistical data!" Well, a man who in discussing such a problem as prostitu-

tion would demand statistical methodology, a cross-section of the entire country, and scientific testing and controls such as are employed in chemical, biologic, pharmacologic, and therapeutic experiments, is simply a windbag badly afflicted with logorrheal exhibitionism. How can we have statistics on the topic under discussion? Will a woman who has given up her former occupation, who has completely changed her mode of life, who has discarded her name, and who has perhaps married and is living a respectable life, go out and advertise the fact and shout from the housetops that she was formerly a prostitute? In discussing such phenomena as prostitution we are forced to be guided by impressions and by the histories of isolated cases. And, besides, half a dozen cases are quite enough. For the question is not: Can *all* prostitutes become respectable women? The question is: Do some prostitutes ever become respectable, marry, and lead the life of a faithful wife and a devoted mother? And if we can point out to half a dozen cases we have a right to answer the question in the affirmative.

The question is of particular importance in

view of the disciples of the Lombrosian school who claim that a prostitute is a peculiar human being, a thing apart, that prostitutes like poets are born not made, that once a prostitute always a prostitute.

Here are three cases, two of which came within our intimate personal knowledge, that is, we know both the man and the woman in the case. For the third case we can also vouch.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MILKMAN'S WIFE

In the early days of our practice an intensely peroxided young lady came in to see us to find out if there was anything the matter with her; in plainer language if she had gonorrhea or not. Even our inexperienced and at that time innocent and naïve eye had no difficulty in guessing the young woman's occupation or profession. After that she came around regularly once a month, usually soon after her menstrual period, for an examination. We never found anything wrong with her: she did not even suffer from leucorrhea. She told us that after every intercourse she used a permanganate douche, which was probably the cause of her escape from venereal disease, as well as pregnancy. About a year later she came in and asked for a very thorough examination; she wanted to know particularly if there was any possibility that she had the real

disease, i.e., syphilis. There was no Wassermann test at that time yet, but as the result of a thorough physical examination and of a careful history—she seemed to be only too anxious to supply all details—we could tell her that there was no reason whatever to assume or to suspect that she had or ever had had syphilis. This was her last visit to us, and we completely lost track of her.

Some five or six years later our milkman who used to supply us with a quart bottle of milk every morning asked us to come and see his boy who seemed to be "pretty sick." We went after our office hours, and found a child of three burning up with fever—scarlet fever. Over the child was the anxious face of its mother, in whom we at once, with some slight shock, recognized our former peroxided patient, though now her hair was a fine natural chestnut brown. There were two other children—one of about four, and a baby of about eight or ten months. We, of course, made no sign of recognition; but she said nonchalantly: "Dr. R., Joe (her husband's name) knows that you know me; and he knows all about me

and my past; so you may act naturally." The child got well, and during the next two or three years we had occasion to make several professional visits, and a more faithful wife, more devoted mother, and more efficient housewife it would be difficult to find. That was our impression, and that was the husband's frequently expressed opinion. She told us that he had picked her up in the street, had become gradually more and more attached to her, and insisted on marrying her. The last examination she had come for to us some five years previously was to make sure that she could have healthy children and that she would "give nothing" to Joe.—It was in all respects a satisfactory household.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JUST ORDINARY

THE third case need not occupy us long because it is rather common; there are many like it. He met her in one of "those houses" and was immediately attracted to her. He visited the house regularly for some year and a half and would have relations with her only, and with nobody else. When she would happen to be "busy" or out, he would leave. But at such times he would feel as if he had missed something; he would walk about despondent until he had met her again. After having known her for about a year, he asked her to marry him. As is usual in such cases, she laughed. He insisted and persisted. When she saw he was serious, and she had in the meantime learned to like him, she told him that soon after engaging in her profession she contracted both gonorrhea and syphilis, but she thought she was cured; for in spite of being with so many men she never gave any disease to anyone. She had

had herself well treated, and she would not go back to her work, until she felt and was assured by the doctor that she was well.

But cured or not, if she married him, it would be with the distinct condition that they were never to have any children. It was not only hereditary transmission of disease that she feared; she was opposed to having children because she thought that one who had engaged in prostitution for so many years was not fit to be a mother of children; she feared that it might be transmitted to them, particularly to the daughters if she had any. He had no objection. He said that he himself was not any too anxious for children. So they married. With his and her little capital they opened a little business, and they live a singularly placid bourgeois life. She is certainly a most faithful wife, and a most industrious business woman and housekeeper. And she is very pious. None of her neighbors is more regular in their church attendance. And her piety does not seem to be a put-on thing. It seems sincere and genuine. As is well known, many prostitutes are deeply and piously religious.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A PIECE OF WRECKAGE

It was a raw, windy November afternoon. Mr. M. was walking on the Rue de Rivoli when he saw approaching him a pitiable looking female creature, a young girl—truly a piece of wreckage. She was shivering with cold, and she was rubbing her hands which looked blue and stiff. As she came up to him, she with the timidity of a whipped dog attempted a smile and an—invitation. She felt that she, poor insignificant creature, was absurdly presumptuous in accosting a richly dressed gentleman of the type of Mr. M., but, as appeared afterwards, she was driven to boldness by gnawing hunger and utter despair. The man looked at her with contemptuous pity and was about to continue on his way. But something of the despair in her eyes, the incarnation of misery which she presented, made him stop. He didn't know just what to say to her and then he

delivered himself of the following sapient remark: "If your hands are so cold, why don't you get yourself a pair of gloves?" Whether because she thought the man was mocking her misery, whether because she saw that this man would never be her client, whether because she was in such despair that she did not care what she said, she answered him with spunk not unmixed with contemptuous sarcasm: "How do you want me to buy gloves when I haven't a sou to buy bread? I haven't had a morsel of food in two and a half days." Mr. M. did not know what to say for a moment. He finally begged her pardon, and said that he didn't mean to say what he said; it was foolish on his part. But would she permit him to buy her a pair of warm gloves? She had never owned any gloves. And that class of people are not in the habit of refusing things that men—any man—offer them; and besides, as said, she was in such despair that nothing mattered. So she answered: "If you wish." They happened to be standing near a well-known department store, so they went in, and he selected for her a fine pair of fur-lined gloves—which made

both her and the saleslady smile, they were so out of harmony with the rest of her wretched apparel. But he didn't mind, and noticing how scantily she was clad, and perceiving that a pair of gloves would not keep her entire body warm, he took her to another department and bought her a warm jacket. He was about to tell her good-bye and leave her when he recollected what she had said about not having eaten for two and a half days: he then turned back and gave her a 100 franc bill. She was thankful for the gloves and the jacket, but the look she gave him when he gave her the money, Mr. M. says he will not forget as long as he lives. For the gloves and the jacket could not still her hunger, nor could they pay her rent; for she had been locked out of her room, and not only had she eaten nothing for two and a half days but *for three days and for three nights she walked the streets steadily;* steadily she had to walk the cold streets, particularly at night, in order to avoid arrest by the bicycle night policemen.

Mr. M. had an appointment and was rather in a hurry to reach it in time, but as he was

about to turn away, she asked him to listen to her for just one minute. And this is what she said: "Whether you believe it or not, whether you think it is just dramatics or not, this is the truth: If I had not met you, who have proved so wonderfully generous, or if I had not gotten some money from some 'client,' my body tonight would have been floating in the Seine. For my landlady has locked me out of my room, and I was at the very end of my forces; I had no more strength to stand the gnawing hunger and to dodge the policemen at night." There was so much intensity in her words that Mr. M. did not doubt the truth of her declaration for a moment. He was profoundly touched, and he told her: "I must hurry now, but my name is so-and-so, and I live in such-and-such-hotel. When you are in real need again, phone me or drop me a line."

Three days later a disheveled and disreputable-looking woman brought a note for Mr. M. She was not admitted into the hotel, but she persuaded one of the doormen to have the note transmitted to Mr. M. The note, written in pencil and scarcely legible, read as follows:

"The piece of wreckage (*épave*) that you saved the other day from despair and the Seine is very, very ill. If you care to make another attempt to save her, here is her name and address." Mr. M. took a taxi which brought him to a street which no respectable man would have ventured to visit alone in the nighttime. Even in the daytime it had a menacing look, lent to it by numerous passing pimps and apaches. After climbing four rickety, dirty and ill-smelling flights of stairs, he entered a *mansarde* the sight of which chilled him to the bone. Not only was it unheated, it contained nothing in which a fire could be made. Through the badly closed little window near the roof, with half a pane stuffed with a rag, the wind was blowing; the room was bare of *all* furniture, except a little iron cot, on which was spread out the corpse of a young girl. Near the corpse was a blood-soaked rag or handkerchief. Mr. M. thought it was a corpse until it was shaken by a racking cough which brought out a quantity of blood. Mr. M. did not wait, but telling her that he would soon be back, he went out and within an hour returned

with a physician. After a cursory examination, the doctor said that where she was she stood no chance of recovery whatsoever; that under the best circumstances she hardly had any chance at all; she was suffering from pleuro-pneumonia and *starvation;* she was intensely anemic; and besides, he called Mr. M.'s attention to the fact, she had all the symptoms of hereditary syphilis. It was not, according to his opinion, worth while to try to do anything for that poor, wretched creature; it would be best to just let her die in peace—and it won't be very long; a day, two, at most three days.

Mr. M., being a layman, did not share the doctor's professional view of the matter; he said that though it might not be worth while, he was willing to give her a chance, and that he would stand all the expense. Within an hour she was removed to a private room in a hospital, with a private nurse. For three weeks her life hung on a very slender thread, which threatened to snap every minute, but she passed the crisis, and under the influence of care, attention, kind and respectful treatment and nutritious food, to all of which she had

never been used, she began to pick up, and in six weeks more—a sojourn of nine weeks altogether—she was able to leave the hospital. But the doctor said that it would be dangerous for her to remain in Paris; that she badly needed a month or two in a convalescent home in the South or at least near some forest in the suburbs of Paris. Having begun the job, Mr. M. decided to finish it; and she was sent to a convalescent home where she stayed not one or two but three months. She then came back to Paris—where a warm, gentle spring had arrived in the meantime—and a totally changed person she was. Not only physically, she seemed to have undergone a complete moral change. Neither in her looks, nor in her talk, nor in her bearing was she the same person. So changed was she that Mr. M. had great difficulty in believing that that was the person whom he had met one November afternoon in the Rue de Rivoli, and who was sent to the hospital, and then to the convalescent home. The physician who had treated her failed to recognize her utterly.

As M. was looking at her, the thought sud-

denly came to him that now he had a problem on his hands; that he simply couldn't "drop" her; that if he did so now, his salvage would have been merely temporary; that she would either have to go back to her former profession —or to the Seine. As if guessing his thoughts, she thus addressed him: "Mr. M., of course I have no claim upon you. Whether I live a day or fifty years, I can never forget you, and can never cease to be grateful to you; for you showed me a side of humanity which I did not know existed. And this is worth a great deal. Beginning with my cruel father, I hated men with a bitter hatred. I see that all men are not the same. But I must be frank. *There are no two ways for me now.* If you drop me now, there is but one issue for me—the Seine. For to the other thing I could never, never, never go back again." And she shivered throughout her entire slight body. "A hundred deaths rather than that. Only now do I see the whole horror of the situation. Had I not met you—perhaps. But now it is impossible. So there remains but one thing—the Seine, or charcoal fumes."

M. felt that if he left her now, her death would definitely rest on his shoulders, and he did not like the idea. And, besides, he felt intense pity for her. She told him what her life had been since her early childhood, how all her life she had been maltreated, humiliated, kicked and starved; she told him of the life of her companions, of the character of the men who exploited them, etc.—and he felt that he simply could not abandon her now.

The story is a long and rather interesting one, but we must be brief and for our purpose the details are not essential. After careful consideration, and several unsuccessful attempts in other directions, it was decided by both that the best thing for her would be the profession of stenography. Fortunately she was fairly good in spelling—even as a "professional" she had been a great reader—and after one year's schooling she was proficient enough to get a position in a big reputable house; she was then twenty. Five or rather six years have passed since, she has not only retained her position, but has had two advances; she is very fond of music, and has joined a musical circle; she has

also joined the Y. W. C. A. (Paris Branch), where she comes in contact with refined companions, and not only has her life been "irreproachable" in the conventional sense; it has been ideal. Her entire life is occupied with her office work, home work, music, lectures and reading. Sex does not seem to exist for her; she does not rouge; she despises flirting, and she certainly behaves better than the girls from our most refined families. Nobody suspects for a moment that this quiet, dignified young lady has not always led an irreproachable life. In addition to her work she has taken up lessons in music and dressmaking, and is now dreaming of higher studies.

A very striking illustration of the Lombrosian dicta: "Prostitutes are born, not made" and "Once a prostitute always a prostitute," isn't it?

Should this monograph serve to dissipate some of the absurdly false ideas, some of the cruel prejudices entertained by even decent and intelligent men regarding prostitution, should it contribute in any degree towards a saner and more humane attitude towards the women who, though less unfortunate than in former years, are still among the most unfortunate of the human race, the writing of these pages will truly have been worth while.

Note: In connection with this monograph, as complementary and supplementary reading, we would recommend a rather remarkable essay by F. E. Stephenson entitled "Love in the Future," published for private circulation only.